ABSTRACT

A shape information coder divides the pixels in the shape information into subsets representing different subsamplings of the shape information. Each pixel in each subset is coded with reference to a context which may be derived from reference pixels in more than one of the subsets. The context preferably includes reference pixels located on all sides of the pixel being coded, which leads to efficient coding. The shape information coder may have two or more cascaded stages, each operating as above, with one subset of pixels passed from each stage to be coded in the next stage. The resulting coded shape information is useful in, for example, wavelet coding of pictures.